

I want my colleagues to know that S. 671 does not expand covered Medicare services. It would simply give Medicare patients who are living in isolated frontier States, such as Wyoming, more choices for mental health providers.

Today, approximately three-quarters of the nationally designated mental health professional shortage areas are located in rural areas. Over half of all rural counties have no mental health services of any kind. Frontier counties have even more dramatic numbers—95 percent do not have a psychiatrist, 68 percent do not have a psychologist, and 78 percent do not have a social worker. Virtually all of Wyoming is designated a mental health professional shortage area.

In Wyoming, there is a total of 474 mental health providers who are currently eligible to care for Medicare patients and bill Medicare for their services—474. Additionally, we have over 500 licensed professional counselors and 61 marriage and family therapists who are currently licensed to practice. None of them are able, at this time, to charge Medicare for the services they provide. By enacting this Seniors Mental Health Access and Improvement Act, that would more than double—more than double—the number of mental health providers available to treat seniors in my State.

Medicare patients in Wyoming are often forced to travel great distances to see mental health providers who are currently recognized by the Medicare program. To make matters even more of a challenge, rural and frontier communities have a tough time recruiting and retaining these providers—all providers but especially mental health care providers. In many small towns, a licensed professional counselor or a marriage or family therapist is the only mental health care provider in the area.

Medicare laws only compound the current situation.

Right now, only psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, and clinical nurse specialists can bill Medicare for mental health services. So it is time the Medicare Program recognizes the qualifications of licensed professional counselors and marriage and family therapists. They do play a crucial role in this Nation's mental health care.

These providers go through rigorous training, and it is similar to the curriculum of a master's level social worker. They must not be excluded from the Medicare Program. I believe S. 671 is critically important to the health and the well-being of our Nation's seniors. It is time for this bill to become law.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate now

stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9:30 a.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:29 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 26, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DALLAS P. TONSAGER, OF SOUTH DAKOTA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT, VICE THOMAS C. DORR, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

PETER A. KOVAR, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE SHEILA MCNAMARA GREENWOOD.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

MARGARET A. HAMBURG, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE COMMISSIONER OF FOOD AND DRUGS, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE ANDREW VON ESCHENBACH, RESIGNED.

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 271:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. ROBERT E. DAY, JR.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

RYAN G. MCPHERSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

MARK J. IVEY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

PAUL L. CANNON
GARY S. LINSKY
STEVEN A. SCHAIK
CHERRI S. WHEELER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

RICHARD EDWARD ALFORD
ROBERT J. ANDERSON
SONDRA A. BELL
TAMORA L. BRIGHT
AMY E. BRYAN
MATTHEW D. BURRIS
ERNEST JOHN CALDERON II
PAOLINO M. CALIENDO
KEVIN D. CATRON
LINDSAY E. CONTOVEROS
ROYAL A. DAVIS
WILLIAM D. DEITCH
JAMES R. DORMAN
GLORIA A. DOWNEY
PAUL E. DURKES
DARREN M. EICKEN
LISA D. FILL
SHELLY M. FRANK
LANCE E. FREEMAN
NATHAN N. FROST
THOMAS A. GABRIELE
DARREN S. GILKES
ANDREW D. GILLMAN
MARLA JUDITH GILLMAN
CORETTA E. GRAY
PATRICIA A. GRUEN
MARGARET L. HANNAN
CHARLES J. HEBNER
RYAN A. HENDRICKS
AMBER E. HIRSCH
BRANDON C. JAROCH
MATTHEW T. KING
SHANDRA J. KOTZUN
ERIKA E. LYNCH
JOSEPH E. MAYNAHAN
SCOTT W. MEDLYN
CHARLTON J. MEGINLEY
ETIENNE J. MISZCZAK
AIRON A. MOTHERSHED
JASON S. OSBORNE
BRENT P. OSGOOD
STERLING C. PENDLETON
STEPHAN PIEL

KEIRA A. POELLET
JACOB A. PUGH
MICHELLE A. QUITUGUA
JENNIFER J. RAAB
DREW G. ROBERTS
DAVID ROUTHIER
LEE F. SANDERSON
MATTHEW G. SCHWARTZ
DAMON P. SCOTT
MULGHETTA A. SIUM
DARRIN M. SKOUSEN
TIAUNDA D. SORRELL
JODI M. VELASCO
WILLIAM DAVID VERNON
TIFFANY M. WAGNER
ELWOOD L. WATERS III
DANIEL J. WATSON
PAUL E. WELLING
ROBERT C. WILDER
DYLAN B. WILLIAMS
RICHARD D. YOUNTS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

CHRISTOPHER B. BENNETT
THOMAS L. CLUFF, JR.
ROBERT C. COTTRELL, JR.
GAIL E. CRAWFORD
TIFFANY A. DAWSON
ANDREA M. DECAMARA
PATRICK J. DOLAN
DAVID B. EBY
MICHELE A. FORTE
PATRICK W. FRANZESE
KYLE W. GREEN
CALEB B. HALSTEAD, JR.
BRANDON L. HART
MATTHEW T. JARREAU
JOHN C. JOHNSON
JAMES H. KENNEDY III
JAMES E. KEY III
ANTONY B. KOLENC
KIM E. LONDON
AMY L. MOMBER
MATTHEW J. MULBARGER
CHARLES D. MUSSELMAN, JR.
KATHERINE E. OLER
DANIEL A. OLSON
RALPH A. PARADISO
MICHELE A. PEARCE
JAMES W. RICHARDS IV
MICHAEL S. RODERICK
THOMAS M. RODRIGUES
ROBERT N. RUSHAKOFF
ELIZABETH L. SCHUCHSGOPAUL
MICHAEL W. TAYLOR
GRAHAM H. TODD
OWEN W. TULLOS
TIMOTHY J. TUTTLE
JEREMY S. WEBER
DAVID J. WESTERN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

WILLIAM A. BARTOUL
JAMES D. BRANTINGHAM
DAVID L. CARR
JOSEPH DEICHERT
JAMES M. GLASS
GREGORY D. JANS
WILLIAM GERALD OSULLIVAN
MARK W. SAHADY
GERALD HARVEY SNYDER, JR.
WARREN A. WATTIES
G. LLOYD WOODBURY, JR.
GEORGE T. YOSTRA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

PETER BRIAN ABERCROMBIE II
TODD W. ABSHIRE
MATTHEW P. ACER
J. A. ACEVEDO
RODER N. ACKLIN
ADAM J. ACOCK
OLGA L. ACOSTA
DAVID C. ADAMS
GREGORY M. ADAMS
KIRK D. ADAMS
MICHAEL J. ADAMS
ROBERT B. ADAMS
SCOTT L. ADAMS
DAVID R. ADAMSON
SUSAN M. ADAMSON
SHILETTE M. ADDISON REED
TONI L. AGNEW
DIANA E. AGUILAR
VICTOR J. AGUILAR
JONATHAN E. AIRHART
COREY M. AKIYAMA
CARMELO ALAMO, JR.
JOHN F. ALBERT
MELISSA M. ALBLINGER
FREDERICK V. ALDRICH
BRIAN M. ALEXANDER
CHARLES R. ALLEN, JR.
JUSTIN T. ALLEN
MATTHEW R. ALLEN